

Comments from:
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PUBLIC HEARING
Public Safety and Security Committee
Tuesday, March 6, 2012 at 11:00 A.M.
Room 2D LOB.

To Members of the Public Safety Committee:

I am writing you today to Oppose SB 325 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH MANDATORY EVACUATION ORDERS.

This bill would impose criminal and civil liability upon a person who fails to comply with a mandatory evacuation order by the Governor of CT or elected head of a municipality. I believe this bill to be an obvious knee jerk reaction to circumstances surrounding certain weather related activity in CT, where people may have been asked or warned to evacuate their premises – and did not – and then needed to be rescued. Yes, this may have put first responders in danger and cost the state and municipality money for rescue operations, but I believe that imposing criminal and civil liability on a person's failure to comply with an evacuation order is bad law and can be dangerous as well.

First of all, I have great issue with mandatory evacuation orders because 1) they are at the whim of government and 2) evacuation orders can cause greater problems. As a citizen of this State I would not want to be forcibly – and under threat of criminal or civil liability – taken from my home, made to travel on the roads where people may be in panic, and highways are backed up with accidents and panicked drivers. In these evacuation scenarios there will no doubt be people fighting over food, water, batteries, flash lights and so forth. I would not want to be put in the middle of all that as a result of an evacuation order. It is not a good or safe idea, especially if I am well prepared and have provisions for myself and my family at home. I would also not want to be told where to congregate – as in a school gymnasium – and be subject to the problems inherent in that type of group herding such as exposure to germs, theft of personal effects and dependency on the distribution of food, clothing and water. Government needs to foster personal responsibility, not forced dependency. There have been many ads already put out by government regarding emergency preparedness. That to me is sufficient.

I should be free to decide whether I should stay in my home or leave it – especially since this type of legislation makes NO provision for compensating me for the looting of my home after being forced to evacuate! The fact that I would not be able to take my preparedness provisions (food, firearms, emergency supplies) with me to any shelter (schools are gun free zones) or evacuation point is disturbing, and even more so that I would leave those behind for looters to take under a forced evacuation. Will the State compensate me for the loss of my property and belongings from my home as a result of looters or trespassers with this legislation? NO. Will the State insure that no one enters my home during my evacuation, for any reason? NO. Will the State compensate me for injuries that I receive as a result of evacuation? NO. This is my biggest problem with this bill. It's all about what the government wants you to do and there are no safeguards for the evacuee in this bill. Bottom line is that I want to decide if I should leave my home, and I want to be the one to decide where I should go and what I can take with me.

Also, with regard to compensation – how do you charge someone for the cost of rescue operations? **WE ALREADY PAY FOR THAT WITH THE TAXES WE PAY!** Our taxes are used to pay for the training, manpower, equipment and everything else included in rescues. That is what the service is there for! First responders are employed to do these things and they are mobilized when impending bad situations arise anyway. Are you going to require compensation for every rescue now? Who will determine what rescues should be compensated by the party needing rescue?

If I choose to stay with my property when bad weather – or any other disaster happens – then I fully accept the consequences of my choice, as should we all, and I don't appreciate the government making that choice for me and punishing me as a result of my noncompliance to government orders. Furthermore, making this non compliance with an evacuation order a Class B Misdemeanor means that anyone who does choose to stay in their home immediately loses their pistol permit in CT – THIS IS WRONG!

I do not support this bill and I hope that you do not advance this legislation.

Thank You For Your Time,
(signed)
Judy Aron